

MSFC Safety Bulletin

Plan, Check, Then Act!



What Happened?

- A forklift operator was moving a large empty wooden shipping crate, from inside a high bay to an outdoor staging area.
- Following standard procedures when moving large loads that obstruct forward vision, the operator was backing the forklift.
- The forklift operator misjudged the height of the open roll-up door, and the forklift mast struck the bottom edge of the door.
- The incident did not result in personnel injury.

What Can Be Done?

- Verify adequate clearance between the loaded forklift and all side and overhead obstacles along the planned path of travel, before actually performing the move operation.
- Where clearances are minimal, stop and verify the actual clearance immediately prior to driving the forklift through the tight space. This practice controls the potential for objects in the vicinity to shift during the interval between planning and performing the move operation.
- Employ a spotter, or signal person, as an added precaution. This practice compensates for the operator's need to attend to the machine and path of travel, especially when backing. It will also aid in identifying unexpected changes in the forklift caused by the weight of the load.